

**MINUTES – EASTERN REGIONAL UP RC&D MEETING**  
**Newberry – February 5, 2008**

**Present:** Dusty King-CEMCD; Jill Maki-Luce Co. Commission; Scott Hughey, Will Bomier & Roger Quist-NRCS; Nathan Fazer-EUPPDR; Pat Carr-Les Cheneaux Watershed Council; Dean Reid-Mackinac Co. Planning Commission; Sharon Brown & Dave Mitchell-LWMCD; Kevin Gouza & Mike Lusk-MDOT; Marilyn Shy and Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

**Call to Order/Approval of Agenda:** The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm by vice-chairwoman Sharon Brown. The agenda was approved with the addition of “25 by 25” under business items.

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** The minutes of the previous meeting of November 7, 2007 were approved (Reid/Maki) with the following addition under the Mackinac County report - the second to last sentence should be added as “This is a breakeven program, as it costs the county zero dollars.”

**Business Items:**

**Update on 5 year Area Plan:** Marilyn reported that the UP RC&D Council five year Area Plan (2008-2012) has been approved by NRCS and signed by the State Conservationist. The plan incorporates input from all conservation districts, the three regional RC&D councils in the UP, and several other partners and members of the public. She noted that this document will guide the UP RC&D Council in their work during the next 5 years, however, new ideas and specific projects that are not in this plan, but are compatible with the goals stated in the Area Plan can also be supported by the Council. Darcy reported that Marilyn deserves much credit for her work in assisting the Council in the development of this new Area Plan. Alan Herceg who oversees the RC&D Programs in Michigan stated that this is one of the best Area Plans he has seen and requested permission to use it as a model for other RC&D areas in the state. Congratulations Marilyn!

**Council Member Representation:** Members present reviewed the appointees and alternates for each county and conservation district as they are listed on the website. The information listed on the website is correct with the exception that Greg Whitney is no longer the alternate for Mackinac County. It was suggested that since Dean Reid is a regular attendee at our meetings, he might be appointed by the CEMCD as their alternate. Dusty will follow up on this idea.

**25 by 25:** Dean Reid explained that the 25 by 25 initiative involves the target of utilizing 25% renewable energy sources (electric and transportation fuels) by the year 2025. This initiative will have a huge impact on agriculture and other states are further ahead in researching various sources of renewable energy that will be appropriate for them than Michigan is. The Eastern Council made a motion to support the 25 by 25 initiative and ask the UP Council to support it also. As part of the discussion of potential renewable energy sources, the BURN UP project and the biomass exchange site on the BURN UP website were mentioned. Marilyn informed the group that the website ([www.upwoodybiomass.org](http://www.upwoodybiomass.org)) would be available shortly. Dean mentioned that Edison Sault is now buying more power and their costs have increased by 35%, which will mean price increases for customers.

**Luce County:** Jill Maki reported that the DNR now has a draft document “Off Road Vehicle Management Plan” which is available on the DNR website. The draft plan does include the stipulation that ORV’s display license plates which she feels will be an effective deterrent to for folks not using good judgment on ORV’s. SORVA does support the idea of license plates. Dave Mitchell mentioned that it is a small percentage of riders that are causing the problems, and these folks know that there is a lack of enforcement. There is a website ([www.lucecountyorvdamage.com](http://www.lucecountyorvdamage.com)) that has photos of some of the damage in Luce County.

**NRCS:** Scott Hughey reported that there will be a WHIP signup starting in March, and a Conservation Security Program signup beginning in April (possibly in the lower peninsula). The Sault Ste. Marie office was a “1 Million Dollar Office” in 2007, cost share programs totaled \$1.1 million! Congratulations! Will and Scott will be attending training and are presently working on planning/engineering for the 2008 field season. Roger Quist mentioned that there are many projects in Schoolcraft and Luce Counties where engineering work/designs are complete and awaiting installation.

**Chippewa/East Mackinac CD:** Dusty King reported that they held their Annual Meeting and board member elections last week. They have tree sale catalogs ready to go out and they will also hold a perennial plant sale one month after the tree sale. The District enrolled some of the acreage they own in the Carbon Sequestration Program (a 5 year commitment).

**Luce/West Mackinac CD:** Dave Mitchell reported that they will also be having their tree sale soon as well as their Annual Meeting. There will be an “awareness event” sponsored by Trout Unlimited, Superior Watershed Partnership and the Nature Conservancy at the Rainbow Lodge (mouth of the Two-Hearted River). This fits in well with something the Michigan Library Association is doing featuring Hemmingway. Sharon Brown reported on progress on the Hamilton Lake Project - it is an anchor on the end of the Heritage Trail which was extended by MDOT and therefore some funding is available for some signage, benches, parking lot improvements at that site. There will also be media kits distributed regarding the Heritage Trail which will help publicize Hamilton Lake. The Tahquamenon Civic Center Project is moving ahead with the authorization of the TAREC Authority (representation from Luce Co, Village of Newberry and 2 townships). They will begin by pursuing a planning grant.

**EUPPDR:** Nathan Fazer reported that the Resource Inventory they were doing for the office of emergency services is now complete. They have received a Federal Scenic Byways Grant for the Heritage Route which will pay for the installation of kiosks at Hamilton Lake, Eckerman Rearing Pond, Slepper Lake Fire/Marsh Overlook. The Regional Solid Waste Plan is almost complete (still awaiting resolutions from a couple twps.). EUPPDR is working with MDOT to create a non-motorized trail plan and work on the Superior Trail (Brimley) is progressing. The engineering study is almost complete for the North Huron Trail and they are also working with MDOT and Wilcox Engineering on an access plan for the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

**UP RC&D Coordinator:** Marilyn is currently working on a proposal which deals with invasive species control and management. This project evolved out of a meeting of the 5 UP tribes and NRCS where common resource concerns were explored. She feels the Conservation Innovation Grant that they are applying for is a good fit for their joint project. There is interest in invasive species control throughout the UP. She has been in touch with Miles Faulk of GLFWC and found out they already have a data base of inventoried public lands west of a line from Watersmeet to Baraga and if data for areas east of this line were obtained, it could be added. The idea of a Cooperative Weed Management Agency for the Eastern UP (Mackinac, Luce, Chippewa Counties) where agencies come together and define the problem and various roles for cooperating to solve the problem has been brought up in the past. A group – UPIC (Upper Peninsula Invasives Council) exists in the Central UP already and a CWMA exists in the Western UP (mainly focusing on aquatic species).

**New Projects: None** – However, much preliminary work has been done for a project that sponsors plan to present in the near future. Will Bomier (NRCS) and Kevin Gouza and Mike Lusk (MDOT) talked about work they have been doing for a project dealing with windbreaks on road corridors. Some “holes” have been identified in the existing windbreak along I-75 and these areas pose safety issues and also financial issues due to higher plowing costs. There are right-of-way and powerline issues that need to be considered

and they are looking at the possibility of funding through an enhancement grant and the possible use of prison crews to accomplish some of the work. There are some problems with post-planting weed control (use of herbicide in right-of-way is prohibited) so they are checking into the use of tree mats and had some preliminary cost estimates for this. They may be able to access NRCS technical support through RC&D. They are also considering doing a small demonstration area in the spring to bring publicity to the project and make landowners aware of possible cost-sharing through farm bill programs.

**Project Updates:** Pat Carr gave an update of the Eastern UP Rapid Watershed Assessment which encompasses parts of the Tahquamenon and Two Hearted River watersheds. The resource profile is complete and they are in the process of forming a Steering Committee. The St. Mary's RWA is scheduled for completion by late March.

Marilyn reported on BURN UP – Chris Burnett has not received a survey back yet from the Tahquamenon School District and Sharon Brown volunteered to follow up on this and contact the school board president.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm.

**Next Meeting: Monday, May 5, 2008 at 1 pm in Sault Ste. Marie. Be sure to continue to include RSVP in meeting announcement for future meetings.**

## **Eastern UP RC&D Council Meeting Minutes**

**May 5, 2008 in Sault Ste. Marie**

**Present:** Dusty King-CEMCD; Jill Maki-Luce Co. Commission; Scott Hughey, Will Bomier & Roger Quist-NRCS; Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC; Pat Carr-Les Cheneaux Watershed Council; Dean Reid- D&S Forestry Svc Co; Dick Timmer-Chippewa Co Commission; Marilyn Shy and Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

**CALL TO ORDER/APPROVE AGENDA & MINUTES:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dick Timmer at 1:00 pm. The Agenda was approved (King/Maki) with the addition of "Public Comment" to be added immediately following the agenda approval. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written (Reid/Fazer).

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

### **BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Annual Plan of Wok:** The 2008 Annual Plan of Work was recently approved by the UP Council and was distributed. Marilyn had added comments/updates for various projects. New projects can be added to the Annual Plan as they are approved. There was quite a bit of discussion about the interest in bioenergy in the eastern UP. Dean Reid feels the Eastern UP is missing out on the "bioenergy revolution" and feels there is a need to get projects going that are appropriate to the resources in the area. Marilyn mentioned that if another round of Conservation Innovation Grants comes up, this might be a good fit. Many expressed the view that some type of demonstration project might encourage folks to get more interested. Dusty will try to organize a planning meeting where a plan of attack can be developed for bringing a project to a future RC&D meeting regarding alternative fuels.

**Legislative Update:** Darcy reported that the UP council has been in contact with the Upper Peninsula legislative aides for Senators Levin and Stabenow and Congressman Stupak, and that all three of these aides attended the last UP council meeting in early April. Since the President's budget request for FY2009 included no funding for the RC&D program, the UP Council members had sent letters requesting support for level funding at a minimum from all these legislators on our behalf. They have been very supportive and they informed us that they will do everything they can to restore funding. At their request, Darcy will forward the letter that the UP Council sent to these legislators to all county commissioners that are appointed to the UP RC&D Council and all conservation districts so that any of these partners that wish to do so may also send letters of support to legislators.

**2008 County Dues Update:** Darcy reported that 9 of the 15 UP counties have paid their \$300 dues as of today. Dues have not been received from Mackinac, Chippewa or Luce Counties. Dick Timmer reported that Chippewa County approved the expenditure and Jill Maki reported that Luce County also approved the expenditure, so the dues should be coming soon. Mackinac County requested that Marilyn make a presentation to their county board of commissioners regarding RC&D and she is scheduled to attend that meeting on Thursday of this week along with Dean Reid.

### **REPORTS:**

**Chippewa County-** Dick Timmer reported that there is a lot of interest in the county in the windbreak tree planting project and alternative fuels. The county has made financial expenditures to renovate the jail, buy a city/county building and now has a new Administrator (instead of a controller). The new administrator will be working with the commission to tie in some of the satellite entities within the county. The Hiawatha National Forest clean-up will take place on May 17 & 18, based out of Strongs. This is a very successful event with participation from the Sierra Club, hikers, USFS, tribes, hunters, ATV riders all working together.

**Luce County-** Jill Maki passed around a sample "Do's and Don'ts" flyer that is targeted for ORV riders in the county. It warns them of the fines that are being levied for riding in areas that are off limits and causing environmental damage. They will also be posting bigger signs at trailheads with some of the same information. She is hopeful that Steve Lindberg will introduce legislation that will require license plates on ORV's. The county will be looking for an equalization director as the former director retired. Dean Reid suggested and Jill concurred that the Sleeper Lake fire could be used to attract visitors interested in

ecotourism to the area – especially those that are visiting Whitefish Point.

**Mackinac County**-No rep present

**NRCS**- Will Bomier reported that they just completed a pilot project with the conservation district called “Operation Windbreak”. Dusty will give more details in her report. They are also planning to do a warm season grass project as a demonstration, and a no-till drill will be available for their use. The Farm Bill has still not been finalized and signed and right now there is a hiring freeze which is affecting them because the vacant engineering positions in the UP are not being filled at this time. Lots of private landowners are buying and planting trees. Roger Quist reported that he has been waiting to get his engineering contracts underway. There is hope for more WHIP funding in the future. He has also checked on the work that was done on the Driggs River a few years ago and found that the lunker structures are still in place. He reported that Luce West Mackinac and Schoolcraft CD’s both had trees sales, but in both locations sales were lower this year than past years. Luce West Mackinac CD held their annual meeting, without the dinner this year due to funding cuts. They held a “walk-through” instead and Sharon distributed surveys for the EUP RWA to those that attended. Scott Hughey reported that the Sault office has WRP rankings coming up shortly. He gave a little more information on the Farm Bill progress - there is still disagreement on the revenues that a farm can earn and receive subsidies. Hopefully it will be settled this week.

**Chippewa East Mackinac CD**- Dusty reported on Operation Windbreak. They planted white spruce trees in areas of concern that were identified by the county road commission and MDOT. They utilized prisoners to do some of the labor and got good support from some private industry. They planted 9” white spruce plugs, used mats for weed control and staked the trees to avoid accidental mowdown. They were not able to put up signs along I-75 to promote the project, but are still hopeful they might be able to in the future. They consider this a pilot project to draw public attention to the project and hopefully get some private landowners interested in participating (cost share available). The cost share programs cannot be done on state and federal lands. They have identified 28 miles in the county that are in need of windbreaks. Dafter Township is interested in getting involved.

**EUPRPDC**- Nathan Fazer reported on several ongoing projects. They received a scenic byways grant for work on the Heritage Route and will be installing kiosks and benches at Eckerman and Hamilton Lakes. The work at the Sleeper Lake site is on hold. Plans for the North Huron Pathway are done and it is estimated that it will cost \$70-75 million to complete. The engineering plans were well done. They are working on a regional non-motorized plan and he had copies of the survey they are distributing to residents. There will be a summit in August or September and they hope to start work next summer. The Solid Waste Plan has been sent to Lansing and is awaiting approval. They also are pre-approved for a \$40,000 grant for a 3 county recycling center. Dean Reid was very supportive of a regional recycling center and Jill Maki mentioned that they currently have no recycling in Luce County.

Other Partners-Dean Reid reported meeting with a wind developer who was looking at wind projects across the UP of 20 megawatts or less. He suggested the Inland Quarry site might be a good fit and similar projects might be implemented in other areas also. Dean told folks that there was a lot of good information on woody biomass on the website [www.smallwoodnews.com](http://www.smallwoodnews.com). Dick Timmer mentioned that wind energy development has been tied in with farmland preservation in other areas of the state. Pat Carr reported on the Eastern UP RWA project. They held a public meeting in Brimley and will probably hold a couple more in Whitefish Twp and Newberry. There is a lot of diversity in this watershed.

**COORDINATOR’S REPORT/PROJECT UPDATES:** Marilyn reported on the BURN-UP project – Tours were conducted at three schools (Whitefish Twp, Calumet/Laurium/Keweenaw and North Dickinson) recently and had good participation. These schools already utilize woody biomass energy systems. Two harvest demonstrations will be taking place in early summer. RFP’s were sent to engineering firms to do pre-feasibility studies at a minimum of three schools and the successful engineering firm was chosen recently. Additional funding has been applied for to take the project to the next phase and possibly provide some funds for one or more schools to actually implement a new woody biomass system. The website is now available and can be viewed at [www.upwoodybiomass.org](http://www.upwoodybiomass.org). A

\$10,000 DEQ grant was received to fund the Central UP Scrap Tire Recycling project (will run through the Delta CD). 3500 tires will be removed from one Menominee County farm. The Alger CD was awarded funding in the amount of \$100,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for remediation of two more road crossings and additional outreach in the Munising Bay Watershed. Several members who are involved in the Superior Trails Project and Marilyn recently attended a conference on “Safe Routes to School”. There is funding available for developing infrastructure for these safe walking/biking routes. She told members about UPIC – Upper Peninsula Invasives Council – which is most active in the central UP but would like to be a resource for groups working on invasives across the UP. A grant proposal was submitted to obtain funding for the Eastern UP Cooperative Weed Management project recently and we should hear soon if it was funded. The funder wants the grant funds used for planning and capacity building for groups working on invasives.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next meeting will take place on August 6<sup>th</sup> at a place to be determined. We will meet at noon for a potluck/picnic with a meeting to follow at 1 pm. Dusty will find a location for the meeting.

**Eastern UP RC&D Council Meeting Minutes**  
**August 6, 2008 in St. Ignace**

**Present:** Dusty King, Wendy Wagoner & Johanna Nugent-CEMCD; Jill Maki-Luce Co. Commission; Scott Hughey & Will Bomier-NRCS; Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC; Pat Carr & Hank Lotoszinski-Les Cheneaux Watershed Council; Dean Reid- D&S Forestry Svc Co; Dick Timmer-Chippewa Co Commission; Mike LaPointe-NRCS Area Conservationist; Marilyn Shy and Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

**CALL TO ORDER/APPROVE AGENDA & MINUTES:** The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm. The Agenda was approved (Reid/King) with no changes. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with the following corrections noted by Nathan Fazer both under the report on EUPRPDC: A summit will be held in September on the regional non-motorized plan and work on the plan will begin next fiscal year, not next summer as stated. They have been “pre-approved” for a grant for regional outreach and education only – not for a recycling center. They do hope that after this outreach effort is completed, they can begin talks on a regional center. (Fazer/Reid).

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**Legislative Update:** Darcy reported that both the Senate Appropriations and the House Appropriations sub-committees have recommended a similar amount of funding for the RC&D program for FY2009 – about \$50.7 million dollars. The National Assoc. of RC&D Councils was hoping for about \$53 million, but this is much better than the President’s budget which zeroed out funding for the RC&D program.

**Attendance at Mackinac Co. Commission Meeting:** Marilyn attended the Mackinac County Commission meeting and was accompanied by Dean Reid. Having a local person like Dean with her was very helpful. They reviewed some past and current RC&D projects in the county. Dean Reid was appointed to represent Mackinac County on the Eastern UP RC&D Council. The Chairwoman of the commission would like to be added to our mailing list.

**REPORTS:**

**Chippewa County-** Dick Timmer reported on the new Mascoma cellulosic ethanol plant which is going to be located in Chippewa County. It creates a great opportunity to use existing infrastructure at Kinross. They prefer a hardwood chip at this point, but the mixed-chip technology will come into play in the future. Folks are excited that researchers from MTU and MSU are working in partnership with local farmers. The company measures their success against competing with \$50/barrel oil. Dean Reid mentioned the spinoff opportunities for unproductive lands being converted to biomass crops. Mike LaPointe reported that there are incentives in the new Farm Bill to increase sustainable biomass practices.

Chippewa County also released bids for jail expansion and the airport received a grant for Military Airport Preservation (MAP). The Farmers Market in Sault Ste. Marie is going great. They are using greenhouses to extend the season and there are also two greenhouses at Bay Mills Comm. College for educational purposes.

**Luce County-** Jill Maki reported that there was a recent set-back to progress on the new community action building. The project has been in the works for 8 years, but recently some folks have gone to the governor’s office opposing the project.

**Mackinac County-** Dean Reid reported on a “Wind Siting” workshop for local officials that is being held

in St. Ignace on August 19 at Little Bear Arena. Dean has been working with a wind developer and the Hiawatha Sportsmen's Club. A recycling plan was approved by the Planning Commission and the County Commission and Dean is making a push for a location in the eastern UP. He feels it can be self-sustaining like the situation in Emmett County and complement the recycling in Chippewa County. The recycling program in Chippewa Co. is really much more than just a recycling center. It is supported by Health and Human Services, MiWorks, and provides job training. Approximately 60% of the costs of running the center are covered by the recycled materials. Marilyn will send information on a community planning grant which might be a good funding source.

**NRCS-** Will Bomier gave an update on Operation Windbreak. They are contacting private landowners about possibilities of technical assistance and cost-share programs for this project. Scott Hughey reported that engineering work is continuing on existing WRP contracts and a new WRP contract is going in right now and they are starting to work with new landowners/clients. The district and NRCS planted a test plot of switchgrass this spring. They need good hard data on how to grow it, and also need access to a warm season grass drill. They are hoping to gain experience they can pass on as they are getting lots of questions from the public. They reported on a project on Sugar Island with the Sault tribe to develop a trail (mulch, boardwalk) to a Culture Camp. The project is funded under EQIP and the grand opening is in October.

Mike LaPointe reported that after the Farm Bill passes things will be somewhat back to normal, but for now he is not able to fill any vacancies. There is still a vacant engineering position in the area and he has not been given permission to fill it. There appears to be more money in the new Farm Bill for conservation and he is working with RC&D to make citizens in the Upper Peninsula aware of the opportunities the farm bill presents.

**Chippewa East Mackinac CD-** Dusty reported on the Emerald Ash Borer program. The district was offered a grant to handle research in the Moran area and they will be hiring 11 temporary people to work with MDA staff. Wendy Wagoner will be supervising this project and they will be taking down the traps, the trap trees, and doing landowner education. Dean Reid is working on the Emerald Ash project with researchers at MTU to determine if there is enough commercial ash to justify cutting it. Dusty expressed frustration that there is a great need in the eastern region for the expertise of a forester and one is not available.

**EUPRPDC-** Nathan Fazer reported that their Solid Waste Plan amendment was approved by the DEQ and Republic Waste will soon be coming to the region. They are also working on a non-motorized plan and will be sponsoring a Trail Summit at LSSU on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

**COORDINATOR'S REPORT/PROJECT UPDATES:** Marilyn reported that she is part of a working group to make assistance available to private landowners (started by MUCC) and she attended a meeting of the wildlife sub-group yesterday. They are hoping the CRMI program (which existed for 2 ½ years) and was such a good program, will get refunded. It still has placeholder language in the budget, but not enough broad-based support (wildlife and forestry people need to work together). She mentioned that often she learns of Farm Bill funding that becomes available at the end of the fiscal year and if we had projects that were already developed and ready to go, we might be able to take advantage of some of these funds which need to be obligated immediately. The Marquette CD has a new RC&D project to educate landowners and resource professionals about how to take advantage of these funds. Marilyn distributed an updated Annual Plan of Work which shows progress on many current RC&D projects.

**NEW PROJECTS:** Operation Windbreak- This project involves contacting private landowners who own property in the 42 miles of priority areas they have identified to educate them about planting windbreaks

on their land. Their goal is to plant 2 miles of private land and 5 miles of public land per year.

CEMCD Alternate Energy Project – This project will promote locally led/community based alternative fuel resources and will allow for technology/information transfer among individuals and groups. The district is meeting with representatives from LSSU, Bay Mills Community College and private landowners to generate ideas. They hope to provide resources for the public (web page, educational brochures, etc) and determine landowner needs and interests. Dean Reid visited Bob Love's Farm where they are experimenting with biodiesel. They determined that 40 acres of seedcrop will satisfy his biodiesel needs. Targeting individual farmers needs is critical (maybe using a portable seed press). Marilyn will research grants that might be used to purchase such equipment.

Both new projects were approved (Reid/Timmer).

**PROJECT UPDATES:** Marilyn reported that the Tahquamenon Area Schools are receiving one of the five free pre-feasibility studies in the BURN UP project. This additional study was added after input from Jill Maki regarding the storage capacity for chips at the school which was thought to be unavailable. Jill pointed out that the school would not require a great amount of storage capacity since they had a local source of chips available in close proximity. Pat and Dusty reported that public meetings were held at the Two Hearted River during River Appreciation Days to inform residents about the Eastern UP RWA project. Meetings are also being held in Brimley and Whitefish Township. The project has been extended to October 1, 2008.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next meeting will take place on November 12<sup>th</sup> in Newberry.

**Eastern UP RC&D Council Meeting Minutes  
November 12, 2008 in Newberry**

**Present:** Dusty King, Pat Carr & Hank Lotoszinski-CEMCD; Jill Maki-Luce Co. Commission; Scott Hughey and Roger Quist-NRCS; Carrie Crigier & Jonathan Miller-Luce W. Mackinac CD; Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC; Becky Otto-Acting UP RC&D Council Coordinator; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D Council

**CALL TO ORDER/APPROVE AGENDA & MINUTES:** The meeting was called to order at 1:15 pm by Becky Otto who agreed to facilitate the meeting in the absence of the chair. The Agenda was approved (King/Maki) The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with one change – Pat Carr and Hank Lotoszinski should be listed as representing the Chippewa East Mackinac CD instead of the Les Cheneaux Watershed Council (King/Maki).

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**New Policy for Submitting Project Applications:** The UP RC&D Council approved a new policy for the submission of new project applications. All new project applications must be received at the Council office a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the regional meeting at which they are being considered for approval.

**County Dues:** Darcy reported that the UP Council made a decision at their meeting on October 9, 2008 to request \$300 in dues from each county for 2009. Letters were sent to all county clerks informing them of the dues amount for 2009 for their budgeting purposes. Invoices will be sent to all counties in January 2009. The dues have not increased since 2002.

**Election of Vice-Chairperson:** This item was tabled until the next meeting. Darcy mentioned that the Eastern Council had only two representatives on the UP Council and according the by-laws they are allowed three representatives. Jill Maki was nominated (Carr/Fazer) to be a representative to the UP Council from the Eastern Council.

**REPORTS:**

**Chippewa County**- Dick Timmer was unable to attend the meeting due to a conflict with the classes that he teaches.

**Luce County**- Jill Maki reported that she belongs to a private group of local citizens that are trying to educate ORV riders so they don't cause damage to the environment in the areas they are using. They recently distributed 2500 flyers and 1500 of the DNR's ORV booklet. They have received some funding from The Nature Conservancy and the Tahquamenon Sportsmen's Club. She reported that there is new damage to the North Country Trail caused by ORV's.

**Mackinac County**- Dean Reid could not attend the meeting due to a work conflict, but he called the office to report on a few items which Darcy passed on to the group. He is still working on an EAB project in Moran in conjunction with MTU to try to determine the feasibility of setting up timber sales on small private parcels. They hope to harvest some of the ash resource before it is damaged by the insect. Dean also reported that he is still working with a wind developer and the Hiawatha Sportsmen's Club. The club owns 35,000 acres in the Naubinway/Engadine area and they are considering a wind development on their property. They may put up a test tower.

**NRCS**- Scott Hughey updated members on the status of the new Farm Bill. They are currently in the “rule-writing” process. The process should be completed for programs which existed in the old farm bill by January. Rules for programs which are new (like the Conservation Stewardship Program) may not be ready until the last quarter of FY2009. The NRCS staff in Chippewa County are working to finish up field surveys before winter and also working with new clients who are walking into their office. Roger Quist reported that a number of landowners in his area still have a few things to complete for their conservation practices so they can get their payments. He also is working on new plans.

**Chippewa East Mackinac CD**- Dusty reported that they are making good progress on the Emerald Ash Borer program and have finished some aspects of the program. They are still working to take down some of the trap trees before bad weather sets in. EAB has now been confirmed on the Garden Peninsula, Delta and Schoolcraft counties, and of course in the Moran area. An ash inventory was conducted in the Moran area and researchers found extensive beech bark disease in the area during the survey. The CEMCD sent a letter to the DNR expressing the need for forestry resource people for the eastern UP and stressing that landowners need this type of assistance. She suggested that the Luce West Mackinac District write a similar letter and requested that this be placed on the agenda for the next UP RC&D Council meeting. She would like the UP Council to write a similar letter to the DNR. She mentioned that the district leased some land to MSU Extension for the purposes of growing test plots of various biomass crops. MSUE was looking for a site in the Eastern UP. They are hoping this research will benefit local citizens as well as tie in with the Mascoma project in the county. One of the CEMCD board members has been in contact with Mascoma officials and the district hopes to meet with him in the near future.

Pat Carr reported that he completed the EUP RWA report and that it is available on the Michigan NRCS website. He is using information from that report as well as the St. Mary’s RWA report to apply for CMI section 319 grants. He is hopeful that the RWA reports will be used by other folks as well. He reported that the Les Cheneaux Watershed project is continuing and they will look at other roles the UP RC&D Council might play in continuing work in that watershed.

**Luce West Mackinac CD**- Carrie Crigier, the new administrator for the LWMCD, said she has been working for about a month now and is starting to get a feel for some of her responsibilities. She participated in the tree order, and oversaw the completion of the EAB program there.

**EUPRPDC**- Nathan Fazer reported money was re-obligated for the M-123 Heritage Route. (They had received a scenic byways grant but never received the funding). The funds will be used to install educational kiosks at Hamilton Lake and Eckerman Rearing Ponds. He also reported that his agency sponsored a non-motorized trail summit in September and they will be holding more “mini-summits” in the future. The Solid Waste Management Planning group will hold a kickoff meeting on December 1 in St. Ignace. The deal with Republic Waste is still uncertain as that company has not finalized their plans. However, Stan Zellar is in the permit process right now for the landfill he has planned for Gulliver. They are continuing recycling education in Luce and Mackinac counties and working with the USFS on a scenic byways plan.

**COORDINATOR’S REPORT/PROJECT UPDATES:** Darcy read a message she received from Marilyn regarding her temporary assignment in Washington, DC:

I am working in the NRCS Operations Management and Oversight Division in Washington, DC. The major responsibilities of my division are: conducting operations management reviews for the NRCS state offices, providing training on operations management to the NRCS state offices, coordinating customer service satisfaction surveys, providing leadership for business planning, and coordinating a national facilitator cadre. Since most of these activities are brand-new to me, my own participation has been pretty

limited! I have sat in with the deputy chiefs and taken notes as they put together the National business plan for NRCS, and helped to put together a national calendar of events, and a national calendar of reports—so far I have compiled over 120 dates for reports that are due. I have most enjoyed my work with the facilitator cadre, and I will attend a national training on facilitation during the first week in November, which I think will be extremely helpful in my future RC&D work when I get back. Before I left for Washington, I facilitated groups working on some of the RC&D projects, and I think the training will help provide me new skills and new tools to help these projects achieve their goals. I have also been allowed to meet with a number of people in leadership positions. One person that provided me a lot of information is in charge of the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Program, that is part of the Farm Bill. I miss my work and my job in the U.P! I return to Michigan on December 19, and I look forward to seeing all of you in January.

**NEW PROJECTS: None**

**PROJECT UPDATES:** Darcy reported that the three Rapid Watershed Assessments that were being facilitated by the UP RC&D Council have all been completed and are available on the Michigan NRCS website. The BURN UP Project hosted two successful woody biomass harvesting demonstrations in September. One was held in Trenary on land being managed by Plum Creek Timber Company and being logged by Nelson Logging. The second demonstration took place near Shingleton on land owned by The Forestland Group and being managed by Cold Springs Forestry. More than 40 people attended each demonstration. Also, five schools received free engineering pre-feasibility studies which were done by Integrated Designs, Inc. The studies will help schools determine if converting their non-renewable heating systems to one which utilizes woody biomass would be feasible. The schools receiving the studies were St. Ignace, Tahquamenon Area Schools, Munising School District, Manistique School District and Stanton Twp. Schools. The studies have been completed and show promising results for most of the schools. One or more of these schools will be considered for a second, more-detailed engineering study (the school will be required to match the award from the UP RC & D Council) in the second phase of the project. The website for the project ([www.upwoodybiomass.org](http://www.upwoodybiomass.org)) continues to be developed and provides a wealth of information about woody biomass utilization.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next meeting will take place on Thursday, February 19, 2009 at 1 pm in Newberry.